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THE  
Restitution of All Things :  
A N  
E S S A Y  
ON THE  
IMPORTANT PURPOSE  
OF THE  
Universal Redeemer's Destination.

---

*καλεῖται το ὄνομα αὐτοῦ μεγάλης βελῆς ἀγέλης*

---

BY THE REV. JAMES BROWN,

Late MISSIONARY from the Society for Propagating the  
Gospel, and CHAPLAIN of the British Garrison at SA-  
VANNAH, in the Province of GEORGIA.

---

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## P R E F A C E.

THE Writer of the following sheets has often thought with regret, that the doctrine of the Divine Interposition for restoring the perverted part of Nature's Works has been injured and depreciated, by the narrow and partial view in which it is commonly represented by many even of its well-meaning defenders; and wishes at least to suggest a more worthy and enlarged representation of it; and to point out some more extensive grounds on which he thinks it may be defended with advantage.

It will readily occur to any one in reading the following discourse, that it is not intended as a regular treatise, in which any subject is thoroughly discussed; but only as a Sketch or Essay, in which some hints are thrown out, some thoughts started, which, to the Writer at least, seemed to be of importance, and to have escaped the notice of most of those who have treated of the Divine Interposition for the Redemption and Restoration of the World. The Author had indeed at first formed the design of a much more extensive undertaking; and intended to have made an attempt to trace the Administration of the Great Design of Omnipotence in this Interposition, in the vestiges of an Universal Providence; and to have estimated the effects of this Administration in the different ages and nations of the world. But this he found himself unable to accomplish from his situation amidst the tumults and alarms of war,

and the distraction and confusion of a garrison and camp, with which he was then connected; as also from the want of the Authors necessary to be consulted in such an undertaking; having lost the few books he was possessed of by the accidents of the war. And having now little prospect of any situation more propitious to the prosecution of such studies, he is induced from a persuasion of the importance of the design, and by the advice of several friends, to submit to the public the present imperfect Sketch; in hopes the view here given of the Glorious Device for the Restitution of Nature may be the means of suggesting a more enlarged conception of it to those who may be capable of doing more justice to the subject, and whose character and influence may give it more weight and authority with the world. Being persuaded that the extensive idea of the design of the Divine Interposition which he has here endeavoured to suggest, is essential to a right conception of the Great Scheme of Redemption; and that it must be delivered and received universally in this enlarged view, to render it reconcileable with just notions of the Author and Restorer of Nature.

One great disadvantage that has arisen from the narrow and partial view in which the subject of Redemption has generally been considered, is, that by rendering it unworthy of our natural notions of the Great Parent and Preserver of all Being, it has rendered it contemptible in the eyes of men of great Minds and enlarged Geniuses; who having never seriously turned their own thoughts to the subject, nor adverted

adverted to its real extent and importance, but conceiving of it in the partial and contracted light in which it is too often represented, have hence deemed it below their attention, and unworthy of their talents. But so great and important an idea as the universal Restoration of the Divine Works, had it once been admitted, must have attracted the attention and engaged the thoughts of every enlarged and elevated mind. And we might then perhaps not only have seen the subject taken up by some of those great men, who, overlooking its extent and importance, have passed it over in silence; but might even have found many of those eminent talents, which have been employed to confound and bring to contempt the partial and unworthy representations generally given of it, engaged in its service, and exerted for its support. Had the clear and comprehensive Reason of a Bacon, the extensive and penetrating Genius of a Newton; or the elegant Thought and generous Mind of a Shaftesbury, the fine conception and inimitable eloquence of a Bolingbroke, been exerted on so august and interesting a subject as Universal Restoration, what a noble and exalted representation might we have had of it! And I cannot but believe, that some who have too wantonly affected to contemn, and too rashly endeavoured to expose, the unworthy representations often given of the Scheme of Redemption, still reverenced a more worthy and enlarged conception of it, which they entertained in their own minds. For I think it is impossible that any one, who at all attends to the subject,

can ever be entirely satisfied that there is nothing in it; nay, I believe it is impossible that he should not be convinced that there is something, and that of great importance, in it; though he may conceive of it very differently from what Theological Systems represent it. And I am persuaded it would be much both to the credit and interest of Revealed Religion, did we content ourselves with establishing and illustrating the fundamental principles, and enforcing the practical purposes of it, and leave many mysterious and merely speculative points on the simple foundation of Sacred Writ,

Had the sublime Genius of Milton been unfettered by the prejudices of System, and the dogmas of the School Divinity, and opened itself to the ennobling conception of Universal Restitution, it is probable we not only had never seen those parts of *Paradise Lost*, which, it must be allowed, fall far below the rest of his subject, and the natural elevation of his Genius; but might perhaps even have seen a *Paradise Regained* as much superior to *Paradise Lost*, as the Redemption and Restoration of a World is more glorious and important than the *Loss of Eden*; and as much more attractive of attention, as an event in which we are all yet to be concerned, and in which our interest in some degree depends upon ourselves, is more interesting than one which is past, and of which we can now only regret the effects. And should in some future period a great and capacious Genius, a second Milton, arise, who, taking up this most grand and important of all subjects

in its true and natural extent and design, shall present it to the world, recommended by all the graces of Poetry, and all the powers of a sublime Genius; then may the ideas of the extent and importance of the Great Purpose of Omnipotence which the following Essay would suggest, be able to surmount the neglect and inattention under which they must now sink from the obscurity of the Author, and the present universal indifference to the subject. For whenever that propitious period shall arrive, when the *Universal Religion of Redemption*, in its genuine spirit and design, shall be understood and received; then will such an enlarged view of it, as is here but slightly sketched, assuredly be acknowledged and prevail.

In a civil and political view, certain established principles and doctrines may be necessary to restrain the extravagance and madness of enthusiasts and fanatics from subverting the peace of society, and confounding all decency and order, both civil and religious. But we are not therefore to imagine, that *the Grace of God, which bringeth Salvation* to all his Works, that the Important Purpose of the Eternal Sovereign for the Universal Restoration of Nature, is necessarily regulated by any of the Forms, Creeds, or Systems, that have at different times been received in the world. In instructing the simple and ignorant for the ends and purposes of life and practice, it may be expedient to confine our arguments to received doctrines and principles. But when we appeal to the boasted Wise, to the Reasoners of this world,

world, in order to their conviction, we must shew, that we can meet them on their own ground, and maintain our cause on the indisputable foundation of *Nature*, of *Reason*, and of *Facts*.

Whoever has given a proper attention to Sacred Writ must have perceived, that the Inspired Authors themselves observe this distinction; and that both their thoughts and language is particularly adapted to the occasion of their argument, and to the conceptions, and even to the prejudices and peculiarities of those to whom they are addressed. For it is impossible not to remark, how different the majesty of their stile, the sublimity of their thoughts, the grandeur and extent of their ideas, when their subject is addressed generally, from what they use when it is particularly addressed to the narrow, gross, and selfish conceptions of the Jewish Nation. This is observable even in the Names and Characteristics by which the Deity is distinguished on these different occasions: on the one, we find such partial Designations as---“The “God of Abraham,”---“The God of Israel,”---“The God of Zion;” on the other, these august and universal Compellations,---“The God “of Heaven,”---“The Most High God,”---“The Most High God, Possessor of Heaven “and Earth.”---How different the idea suggested by---“The Lord which dwelleth in “Zion,” from the majesty expressed by---“The “High and Lofty ONE that inhabiteth Eternity.” The books of Job and of Daniel throughout are striking illustrations of this observation.

ervation. Even St. Paul himself, when he appeals to the Jews, is obliged to rest his arguments on the narrow and partial foundation of their national religion and prejudices; but when he addresses himself to the Athenians, a philosophical and enlightened people, he appeals to the natural attributes and acknowledged operations of the Deity, as the Universal Creator and Upholder, the impartial Parent and Preserver of all Being;---“ God that made the world “ and all things therein---Lord of Heaven and “ Earth---in him we live, and move, and have “ our being; as certain also of your own Poets “ have said, For we are all his offspring.” &c. And if through the whole of Sacred Writ, we thus distinguish what refers to the general doctrine of the Divine Interposition, and the Universal Providence of the Supreme Being respecting the religious and moral state of the world; from what refers only to the partial religious institutions of the Jews as a political State, and is accommodated to their national prejudices, we shall find, that considering the Divine Scheme of Redemption in the most enlarged view, is only recurring to the genuine original notion of it as uniformly displayed in Scripture; though for want of this distinction it has often been contracted and debased under the seeming sanction of Revelation itself.

But however important the *Design* of the following sheets, the *Execution* may perhaps require many apologies. Of one the Writer is particularly aware;---that in many places the language may appear stiff and laboured, and in  
the

the latter part especially, sometimes bordering on tautology ; for which he can only apologize by assigning the real cause,---the desire of keeping the principal object constantly in view, of presenting it in every point of light, and giving the fullest and strongest impression of it ; and the natural defect of language, which every one must on some occasions have found inadequate to ideas, especially when new and uncommon thoughts are endeavoured to be suggested. But after all his endeavours, he still feels that he has fallen far short of the idea with which his mind laboured, and which it was his desire and aim to represent.

THE

T H E  
R e s t i t u t i o n   o f   A l l   T h i n g s :  
A N  
E S S A Y.

— καλεῖται το ὄνομα ἀυτοῦ μεγάλης βελῆς ἀγελάτη.

**Isa. c. 9. v. 6. Sep. Verf.**

**W**HOEVER, setting all partial expositions and preconceived opinions aside, will give a serious and unprejudiced attention to those predictions in Sacred Writ, which allude to the interposition of a Divine Person in behalf of finite Beings; must see reason to believe, that they imply a purpose and design far more glorious and important than what seems to be generally understood by them; and point to objects and events far more extensive and interesting than what we hear generally ascribed to them. And the same reflection must likewise arise from a careful perusal of the descriptions of that universal innocence and perfect felicity, so often mentioned as the destined effect and consequence of that interposition. This opinion will be still further confirmed, if we examine the natural history of religion and morals in the different ages and nations of the world; particularly the allusions made to this

B subject,

subject, and the notions and expectations universally entertained concerning it, by the good and wise; by those who in every age and nation have been distinguished with a more than ordinary portion of that Breath Divine, that happy inspiration, to which, even in the opinion of a Heathen Philosopher, all human excellency and superiority are to be ascribed\*.

From the attentive consideration of these different subjects, there must arise in the unbiassed mind, if not a conviction, at least a strong persuasion that the Divine purpose and plan of redemption has always had effects far more universal, and far more beneficial to the world, than have commonly been attended to; and a presumption, that it will finally produce a consummation and issue, far more grand and interesting, far more happy and glorious, far more worthy of the Counsel and Design of the Omnipotent, than what it has generally been applied to by most of those who have reasoned and written on the subject. It will be found to import nothing less than the entire expiation of all guilt and crimes in nature; the final extirpation of evil, suffering, and misery, in every region of being; the complete restoration of all the perversions of nature from its original beneficent design; and the introduction and establishment of universal perfection and felicity through all the works of God. This is an issue that may justly be called *The Redemption of the World*; ---this is a destination truly worthy of the *Heir of Omnipotence!*

\* Vir magnus nunquam fuit sine afflato divino. CICERO.  
And

And as the narrow and partial representations too often given of the Divine Counsel and Design in the Redemption of the World, (if, in the confined view in which it is commonly considered, it may be so called), is the principal foundation of the most plausible objections of infidels against it, it must be of the greatest moment to diffuse more enlarged and more worthy notions and conceptions of this truly Glorious and Important Design; and to shew that such notions and conceptions are founded in Nature and Reason, and supported both by Revelation and Facts.

It is therefore the design of this Essay to offer a few observations on this interesting subject:

By endeavouring, first, To point out what appears, as well from Nature and Reason, as from Revelation, to be the design and extent of the mediatorial Character and Government of the Redeemer.

And, secondly, To suggest some idea of the happy effects of his undertaking, and of that glorious and important Consummation which we expect as the ultimate end and object of it.

The general import of this Essay is concisely implied in the sentence prefixed to it from the Septuagint Version of the Sacred Writings,---*καλεῖται τὸ ονόμα αὐτοῦ μεγαλὺς βεληνεύσις αγέλος*,--his name shall be called *The Messenger of the Great Counsel*, or, *The Minister of the Important Purpose, the Mighty Design*. And the following sheets will consist chiefly in an attempt to illustrate what is implied in this designation, with some observations on the concomitant characteristics ascribed to

the Messiah, as expressed in the common English translation of the Sacred Scriptures\*.

The whole of the verse alluded to, inserting the above expression, will stand thus :---*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulders: and his name shall be called The Messenger of the Great Design, The Wonderful Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.* And whether, by this important description, Isaiah might be immediately conscious of alluding to any thing beyond a deliverance from the misery and oppression which his country then groaned under from the Kings of Israel and of Syria; this is certain, that no such distinguished personage, as is here described, ever appeared for their deliverance on that occasion; and that the designations and characteristics here

\* In our common version the designation implied in the words above quoted is entirely omitted, nor do I find in Commentators any satisfactory account of this difference in the two versions; but the most probable conjecture is, that it arose from their having been translated from different copies of the original. But as the Septuagint is the most antient version, the copy from which it was translated, may reasonably be supposed to have been the most correct and perfect; though our translators might not choose to depend upon it where it differed from the copies of the original in their hands. And as the words are to be found not only in all copies of the Septuagint, but also in several other antient versions of the Old Testament, as the Caldean, Arabic, Syriac, &c. this, together with their being perfectly conformable to the idea of the Mediator's destination, as represented in many other parts of Sacred Writ, is certainly sufficient to justify the recourse had to them here.

assigned can be ascribed to none besides the glorious Redeemer of the world, the destined Restorer of all the works of God; and the ever-increasing peace and felicity here promised can only be applied to the perfect harmony and endless happiness, which, as the Governor of that redeemed world, the Father and Guardian of that restored and perfect order of things, he shall introduce and maintain in all the regions of his dominions. In Him alone, of mortal birth, can all the different, and seemingly incompatible, characters here mentioned, be found united; who, though he was originally in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet condescended to be born of a woman, to be made in the likeness of man, and to veil his essential glory in the humble robe of Humanity; and "therefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.—God having put all things under his feet, and given him to be head over all things. Angels and Principalities and Powers being made subject unto him." And it is in the fullest extent of this description of universal dominion and sovereignty, that we understand the expression, *The government shall be upon his shoulders.* Which we conceive to imply, that the sole ordering and direction of the government of all finite and subordinate Beings in every region

gion of Nature is committed unto him, for the accomplishment of that complete redemption, that universal restoration of the Divine works, which we suppose to be the ultimate end and design of his mediatorial character and government. This is (the *μεγαλος βολης*) the Great Counsel, of which he is called the Messenger ; this is the Important Purpose, the Mighty Design, of which he is appointed the Minister.

That the adorable Redeemer was from eternity Supreme Lord of Nature, is a necessary consequence of his essential divinity, and of his agency in its original production; but it appears from many expressions in Sacred Writ, that the immediate administration of the present economy and government of the world, and particularly of the human race, is in a special manner committed unto him, in consequence of his mediatorial character : and this delegated power and sovereignty appears to be different, and exercised upon different principles, and by different rules, from his natural essential dominion ; the principles and laws of which were adapted to a state of perfection and felicity, in which evil and disorder had no place. But the principles and laws of this mediatorial sovereignty and dominion are adapted to that disordered and perverted state of things which we now see ; the evil tendency and effects of which it is appointed to obviate and remedy.

And perhaps for this very reason, that the Mediator might be properly qualified, in respect to finite Beings, to administer this delegated govern-

government, to accomplish all the ends and purposes of this Important Design, which he is ordained both to declare and execute, it was necessary that he should assume a finite nature. And though the Redeemer's assumption of Humanity might be relative only to the redemption and restoration of the human race, yet we know not to what other objects, and what other purposes, his mediatorial office and character may extend; nor do we know to what other Natures and Orders of Being the Universal Mediator may have condescended, in order to accomplish the truly Glorious Purpose, the truly Great Design, of restoring perfection and felicity in all the regions of the Divine dominions. This at least seems certain, that whenever the Deity condescends to hold intercourse with finite Beings according to the principles of their nature, the manner and form of his communication must be accommodated to some of their senses or means of perception, and his essential glory veiled in some such representation or appearance as they are able to bear. And it is, perhaps, by virtue of this personal assumption of Humanity in the Mediator, that all sensible intercourse and communication between God and man is carried on. We are expressly told, that *no man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.* Hence all the visible manifestations and personal appearances of the Divinity, so often mentioned even in the Old Testament, seem referable to the Son, and might have a relation to his Humanity, though not yet formally

inally assumed; at least they were certainly a part of the exercise of his delegated mediatorial office and character; an essential branch of which we understand to be the dispensing of all Divine communications to created Beings. And we suppose it to imply, not only the part which the Redeemer acted during his personal sojourning on earth, his founding and instituting the Christian religion, his particular care and providence towards the church, but the administration of the whole of the Divine dispensations towards all finite and subordinate Natures.--- Even the great and important events in the History of the World; the advancement and decline of societies in knowledge, religion, and morals; the rise and fall of Empires, Kingdoms, and Nations, may all be considered as part of this delegated government; and by a regular chain and connection, which we are unable to trace, lead towards its grand and ultimate object, the complete and universal establishment of the Empire of the Prince of Peace; when “all the Kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ.” And though to our limited view the present course of this world may appear only a scene of confusion, distraction, and overturning, without purpose or design, yet by this succession of unseeming events, he “will overturn, overturn, overturn it; till he come, whose right it is, and will give it him.” And as we cannot discern the design and tendency of many of these events, neither do we know the agents and operations by which they are effected. But, though

though we know not what invisible agents may be engaged, nor in what manner they interpose in human affairs, yet we know from the authority of Sacred Writ itself, that such are employed in the execution of the divine purposes with men\*; and from the same authority we also know, that to the Redeemer, for the administration of his Mediatorial Government, all the Angels of God, all the Powers in heavenly places, are subjected: that either in his own person, or by subordinate agents, he may order and transact whatever may be necessary in the progressive execution of the Important Purpose, the Great Design, of finally establishing universal peace, order, and felicity, through all the works of God.

It is perhaps deserving of observation, that in the account of the production of the world, in the first chapter of Genesis, the absolute term *God* is constantly used; but when the account of the administration of the new-created world begins, the term *The Lord God* is introduced. And in all the intercourse and converse between the Deity and the first inhabitants of the world, this appellation is constantly given to the Divine Person whom we find administering the affairs of the new creation, and seems to denote a distinct person and character. And in the several conversations between this Divine Personage and Adam, Eve, Cain, &c. as recorded in the third and fourth chapters of Genesis, it seems plain that he presented himself in some

\* See Dan. chap. x. ver. 12, and 13.—Also Dan. chap. xi. ver. 1.—Also Dan. chap. xii. ver. 1.

personal form, or visible appearance. And whether or not this might haye any relation to the assumption of Humanity in the Mediator, there is, I think, no doubt but it is to be referred to the same person, and relates to his mediatorial character, being part of the administration of that important government, which was from eternity ordained to be laid upon his shoulders ; and which comprehends, not only, as the Jews fondly believed, the protection and restoration of their nation, but of all the race of mankind, nor only of the race of mankind, but of every creature of God. We are certainly far from having an adequate conception of the Glorious Mediator's undertaking and character, when we represent him merely as the institutor of a particular system of religion, and the author of redemption to only a few of those who profess that religion. How much more worthy and exalted is the idea, which St. Paul gives of the dignity of his character, and of the importance and extent of the design of his mediatorial office, in the following passages :---

" That in all things he might have the pre-  
 " eminence, it pleased the Father that in him  
 " should all fulness dwell ; and, having made  
 " peace by the blood of his cross, by him to  
 " reconcile all things unto himself ; by him, I  
 " say, whether they be things in earth, or  
 " things in Heaven." And again, " That in  
 " the dispensation of the fulness of time, he  
 " might gather together in one all things in  
 " Christ, both which are in heaven, and which  
 " are in earth, even in him." Thus it is clear  
 from

from Scripture; that the effect of the propitiation made by the Universal Redeemer; and the influence of his mediatorial character, not only concerns all the human race; but extends to the whole system of Beings; and also; that this extent of influence and power is delegated to him for the purpose of universal mediation and redemption. He himself declares; “ All power “ is given unto me in heaven and in earth;” where the word *given* plainly implies some particular delegation of power and authority distinct from his eternal essential supremacy: And wherever this delegation of authority, this subjection of Principalities and Powers unto him, this sovereignty and dominion over all Beings in heaven and in earth, is mentioned; it is mentioned as a branch or consequence of his mediatorial character. It is in relation to this character, that the designation of *The Son of Man* is given to the Redeemer; under which designation Daniel represents him as receiving the investiture of this his delegated authority; and also describes the nature and extent of it. “ I “ saw, says he, in the night visions, and behold “ one like the Son of Man came in the clouds “ of heaven, and came to the ancient of days, “ and they brought him near before him; and “ there was given him dominion and glory, and “ a kingdom; that all people, nations, and lan-“ guages should serve him: His dominion is “ an everlasting dominion which shall not pass “ away, and his kingdom that which shall not “ be destroyed.” From whence also it is evident, that the sovereignty and dominion here

described is different from that eternal power and supremacy, which, as God, he essentially possesses over all Beings; as is clear also from the following words of the same Daniel, where he says, " In the days of those kings shall the God " of Heaven set up a kingdom which shall " never be destroyed—it shall stand for ever." Now this description of a kingdom to be set up in a determined time; of dominion, glory, and a kingdom, to be *given* unto the Son of Man, cannot be applied to an eternal essential dominion and sovereignty, and must therefore be applied to the delegated mediatorial kingdom and government of the Redemer: which we understand to comprehend, not only a moral and spiritual authority and dominion, but the exercise and administration of the whole Divine œconomy and dispensations, as well in the kingdom of Nature and Providence, as in that of Grace and Redemption; and especially to allude to that happy period, that restored and perfect Order of things, for the introduction and establishment of which, this mediatorial office and character were assumed, this dominion, and glory, and kingdom, were given to the Redeemer.

Of the exercise of this important *Government*, of the administration of this *Great Design*, in the present state and order of things, a principal part seems to be, the communications of all revelations and manifestations of the Divine Will and of the Divine Ways to finite Beings. For all this we ascribe unto the character of the Mediator; whether performed immediately in

his own person, or by the agency of ministering spirits visibly or invisibly sent, or of men particularly inspired and commissioned for that purpose. Thus carrying on by such various Divine interpositions as to infinite wisdom might seem necessary, one progressive plan; the present design and effect of which, is the preservation of the knowledge and fear of God, and the practice of virtue and piety, in a degree sufficient for the purposes of the Divine Providence in the present world; and the final end and object, the restoration of universal innocence and felicity, the complete establishment of the Government of the Prince of Peace.

Before the times of Moses we have but a very short and imperfect account of the religious affairs of mankind; and from that time, only of those which relate to the Jewish nation. Probably because the Divine Revelations, and communications made to them, were of greater importance, and more universally interesting than any others; therefore the Divine Providence took care that they should be preserved, and transmitted to latest posterity. But both from sacred and prophane history we have reason to conclude, that these were not the only manifestations of the Divinity, and of the Divine Ways and Designs, made to man; and that the Deity hath, in no age nor nation, left himself without a witness, nor men without the means of knowing how to render themselves and services acceptable to him. Whoever will give a careful attention to the natural history of the morals, and religious sentiments of

mankind, especially in the early ages of the world, will find many circumstances to confirm the above observation, and many facts from which we may infer, that the knowledge and fear of the true God, and piety and devotion towards him, and hence good morals and integrity of character, have in all ages been more universal than seems to be generally apprehended\*. And the preservation of these, by whatever means effected, we suppose to be the strongest proof of the extensive influence of the Mediator's Government, and the best effects of the administration of that Important Design, of which he is appointed the Messenger.

But further, we may even see strong reasons to believe, that a much more full, explicit, and particular revelation of the purpose of redemption, through the mediation and death of the Universal Redeemer, than any that has come down to us, or to the times of authentic record in any nation and country with which we are acquainted, was originally communicated to the world; and universally known, understood, and received. What appears an incontestable evidence of this, is the universality of sacrifice; which we know to have been practised with nearly the same rites and ceremonies among all nations in the known world, from immediately after the fall of man, till the time of the Redeemer's appearing on earth. Whence can it be said, or even supposed, that such a practice took its rise? The most absurd superstition

\* Vide infra, p. 33, 34, and 35.

could never of itself have suggested any thing so inconsistent with reason, and our natural notions of the Deity, as to suppose that the shedding of the blood of any of his creatures could be acceptable to him, or render him propitious to those by whom, or for whom, it was shed. Yet this was the most universal of all religious rites, and every where most strictly observed, and held to be of the highest importance. Must we not then necessarily conclude, that it was originally instituted by a Divine Revelation, as the memorial and representation of some important religious event, which it was intended to preserve the knowledge and expectation of among mankind? Nor have we any reason to doubt, but that the nature and design of it were fully explained, and perfectly understood, at its original institution; but as mankind have always been more influenced by sense and habit, than by reason and reflection, in length of time, though the sensible part was preserved by tradition, the thing intended to be represented by it was almost entirely forgotten and lost.

Another fact, from which we may infer that this original revelation was at first explicit and particular, is, the universal distinction of primogeniture; and the great account that was made of it among all nations, especially in the early ages of the world; and this primogeniture reckoned, as it appears, in the first-born of the female, being itself a male\*. Of the history of

\* *Mas qui vulvam aperuisset.* It appears that the distinction of first-born belonged to the first-born son of a second wife, in preference to an elder son by a first wife, who was not the first-born of that woman. See 1 Chron. v. 1, 2.

the Ante-diluvian world we have scarce any remains, except the names of the first-born of the several families.

To this we may add the practice of human sacrifice, especially of the first-born, in cases of extremity; which, the more unnatural it is, the greater reason there is to derive it from a supernatural origin. The King of Moab, in a case of the last extremity, “ Took his first-born son “ that should have reigned in his stead, and “ offered him for a burnt-offering upon the “ wall.” It does not appear that Abraham himself was either much shocked or surprised at the command to offer up his son Isaac; and might perhaps be so far from thinking this order inconsistent with the promise, *That in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed*, that he might think it the direct accomplishment of it.—“ Wherewith shall I come before “ the Lord, and bow myself before the High “ God? Shall I give my first-born for my “ transgression, the fruit of my body for the “ sin of my soul?” Whence could the prophet have occasion to encounter so absurd and extravagant a notion as this? Whence, but because however absurd, and even impious, it was too prevalent? From these, and many other instances that might be adduced, there is reason to conclude, that there was among men, from the earliest ages, a general notion, that by the sacrifice of some first-born of a woman, the Deity was to be rendered propitious to mortals; and that this persuasion must have originated from some Divine Revelation, the perversion

and

and corruption of which produced the impious opinions and practice above alluded to. What else could have led men into a notion so horribly repugnant to every sentiment of nature, of reason, and of religion?

But from an attentive observation of particular facts and circumstances in the general history of the human race, there is reason not only to conclude, that the knowledge of a propitiation by the blood of the first-born was originally communicated to men; but also, that a notion and expectation of a general restoration of human affairs, and of some illustrious and divine Person to appear in the world for effecting this purpose, was universally diffused, and propagated through every age. And especially about the time of the Redeemer's actually appearing on earth, this notion so strongly prevailed, that the whole world were in eager expectation of its immediate accomplishment; as we may learn both from sacred and profane history\*.

Whether this notion and expectation arose from the tradition of that original revelation we have already mentioned; or whether it pleased the Deity in different ages and nations to favour particular persons with such divine influences, as not only raised in themselves a presentiment of this great and interesting event, but also enabled them to excite a general notion of it in

\* See Matt. ii. 1. 2.—Luke iii. 15.—Also Luke xix. 11.  
—Vide etiam Virg. Pollio Passim;—et Taciti Hist. lib. 5. Pluribus persuasio inerat, antiquis Sacerdotum litteris contineri, eo ipso tempore fore, ut valesceret Oriens, profectique Judæâ rerum potirentur, &c.

the world; or to whatever other cause we ascribe it, the fact is certain, that such a persuasion and expectation had footing, and generally prevailed in the world. For besides the divine transports of the Sacred Writers, whenever they recur to this important subject, we find heathen Poets, Philosophers, and Historians, very clearly alluding to this expectation; and some of them describing, in the most sublime strains, the great and universal felicity that should hence be derived to the whole system of Nature. Among these the sentiments of Virgil are so particularly striking, so directly to the purpose of the present argument, and so plainly allude to that blessed and happy consummation, which we expect as the ultimate object of the Mediator's Commission and Government, that it is hoped no apology will be thought necessary for quoting them here. "Now," says he, "is arrived the last happy period predicted by the Cumæan Sibyll; the great circle of time begins anew; Justice and Integrity again return to the earth; the ages of Innocence and Happiness again return; and a new progeny is sent down from heaven. Auspicious be the birth of that infant, at whose nativity the iron age of Violence and Crimes shall end, and the golden age of Peace and Innocence arise on the world\*."--"From thence, should there

\* Ultima Cumæi venit jam carminis ætas :  
 Magnus ab integro seclorum nascitur ordo.  
 Jam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna :  
 Jam nova progenies cœlo demittitur alto.  
 Tu modo nascenti puero, quo ferrea primum  
 Desinet, ac toto surget gens aurea mundo,  
 Casta fave Lúcina.

" yet

“ yet remain any vestiges of our wickedness  
 “ and crimes, being expiated, the earth shall  
 “ now be absolved from perpetual dread. He  
 “ shall participate of Divinity ; he shall be ex-  
 “ alted to divine honours ; he shall govern the  
 “ tranquil and happy world in his Paternal  
 “ Power and Virtue \*.”----“ O beloved Off-  
 “ spring of the Deity ! illustrious Son of the  
 “ Most High ! now the time approaches ; haste  
 “ to assume thy glorious destined honours †.”  
 And as St. Paul represents the whole creation  
 as groaning and labouring in pain for this hap-  
 py event ; Virgil, in the same figure of speech,  
 represents it as exulting with joy in the prospect  
 of it.---“ Behold the round world, the tracts  
 “ of the sea, and the highest heavens, exulting  
 “ with gladness ! Behold how all things re-  
 “ joice at the prospect of the coming age ! ‡”  
 Now, though the general peace at that time  
 restored to the Roman Empire might be the  
 immediate occasion of this sublime description,  
 yet it is certain, that nothing which Virgil  
 could see, or hope for, from that occasion,  
 could justify, even in a poetic view, his allu-

\* Te duce si qua manent sceleris vestigia nostri.

Irrita perpetuâ solvent formidine terras.

Ille Deûm vitam accipiet, Divisque videbit

Permixtos heroas, & ipse videbitur illis :

Pacatumque reget patriis virtutibus orbem.

† Aggredere, O magnos, aderit jam tempus, honores,  
Cara Deûm siboles, magnum Jovis incrementum.

‡ Aspice convexo nutantem pondere mundum,

Terras tractusque maris, cœlumque profundum :

Aspice venturo lætentur ut omnia sæculo.

Virg. Ecl. 4.

sions to a felicity so far beyond all that we can conceive in human affairs, or raise his mind to conceptions so far transcending all our ideas of sublunary things. And indeed both the stile and sentiments through the whole of the above Eclogue are so much in the manner and spirit of the prophet Isaiah, that many believe them to be borrowed from his writings; whilst others, with more probability, suppose them to be borrowed from the books of the Sibylls, which are now lost\*; and indeed the words with which the above quotation begins seem to put the matter beyond a doubt. And though these books are now entirely lost, yet from the allusions made to them, and fragments of them preserved by other writers, it is generally allowed, that many of their predictions evidently alluded to the character and kingdom of the Messiah, and that universal peace and happiness which should take place under his government. But from whatever source Virgil might have derived the above sentiments, and though he errs in his application of them; yet, from the enthusiasm with which he dwells upon them, we may justly conclude, that he felt them con-

\* What renders this the more probable is: That from the absurd accounts given of the Jews, and their history, by contemporary writers, it appears that the Romans, in Virgil's time, were very little acquainted with any of their writings; if they had, their history would certainly have claimed the first attention; the rational account of which given by Moses, they would undoubtedly have preferred to those extravagant ones, which some of their best writers have adopted.—Vide Just. lib. 36. c. 2. and Taciti Hist. lib. 5. ab initio.

genial to something within his own mind, and conformable to some common notion and expectation particularly entertained by the good, the thoughtful, and enlightened, in all ages.

I might here add the sentiments of Socrates, of Plato, of Orpheus, and many others of the wisest and best of mankind. Socrates, in a conversation with his friends, from the present visibly perverted state of the world, infers the apparent necessity of a Divine Mediator and Restorer, and from hence, that we have reason to hope for and expect one. And on another occasion he says something very remarkable, and then thought very mysterious, concerning a Divine Person to be sent from heaven to instruct mankind, and restore them to virtue and happiness. And Plato, either in his own person, or in that of Socrates, makes mention of the Divine *Logos* as of a personal existence, and seems to have had an idea of his distinct operation in the œconomy of the world. And when Orpheus (if he is really the author of the fragments that are ascribed to him) admonishes the person to whom he addresses himself, “that the things which he had been revolving in his mind should not rob him of his much-desired futurity,” and directs him “to look to the Divine *Logos*, and adhere to that”\*; whether by the

\* ————— ἐξερέω γαρ ἀληθία; μηδὲ σε τα πρὶν  
Ἐν τίθεσσι φανερτα φίλος αἰῶνος ἀμέρεστη.  
Εἰσ δὲ λόγον θείον βλέψασ, τέτω προσέδρευε.

\* I will declare truth, Neither shall those things which you have been considering in your mind rob you of desired futurity: But looking to the Divine Word (Logos) hold to that.

word (*Logos*) he means a person, or a precept, law, or instruction, it is clear he recognizes some Divine Aid to which men might have recourse when human reason fails them. And whether he derived it from the writings of Moses, of which he certainly had some knowledge\*, or from a still more antient source, he seems to have had a clear persuasion of the Deity's being to appear personally on earth at a certain period§; as also an idea of the *Only-begotten*, who alone was capable of beholding the Divinity, and of personal approach unto him†. And if his describing him as of Caldean extraction † refers to the promise made to Abraham, he must have had a much clearer conception of that promise than ever the Jews themselves had. But I should rather suppose it to refer to some more original and explicit

\* Ως λογος αρχαιων ως ιδεογενης † ειταξεν,  
Ἐπι θεούν γνάμασι ταῖσιν κατα διπλακα θεούν.

§ Οὐδὲ τις ἔσθ' ἔπειρος συ δε κεν γέα παντ' ἐσφήσαισ,  
Αἴ κεν ιδης αυτον πέιν δη ποτε δεῦρο ἐπι γαίαν.

† Οὐ γάρ κέν τις ιδοι θητῶν μεροπῶν κράτουντα,  
Ἐπι μη μενογενης τισ ἀπορροξ φύλας ἄνωθεν  
Χαλδαῖων.

\* As the doctrine of the antients, as he that arose from the water hath taught: Who divinely received precepts according to a twofold law.

† And she called his name Moses: And she said, because I drew him out of the water.—Exod. ii. 10.

§ Neither is there any beside him. But you would clearly discern all this, could you see him before the time when he shall at last appear here on the earth.

† None can see the Supreme Ruler of mortals except a certain Only-begotten, whose descent is from an antient race of the Caldeans.

revelation, such as we have already mentioned, which among the Jews might be entirely lost during their slavery in Egypt. Nor can I leave this person without observing, that in all the fragments ascribed to him which remain, his ideas of the nature and perfections of the Deity are so truly worthy and sublime, that they fall not below the purest and best conceptions of the Supreme Being even in Sacred Writ; and, to those who will look into them, may serve instead of many arguments to prove, that the knowledge and fear of the true God were more genuine and universal in the early ages of the world, than is now generally supposed\*.

Should it be objected, that the above notions and sentiments in the heathen world were derived from the Sacred Writings of the Jews; though the opinion has little probability to support it; yet, allowing the objection its full weight, it does not weaken the force of the present argument; which, without disputing about the means made use of to effect it, aims only to prove, that the Divine Providence has taken care to diffuse among all nations, a notion and expectation of a supernatural interposition in behalf of human affairs, and to excite in them desires and hopes of a general restoration of the world under the auspices of an Universal Mediator †; and that the influence and effects

\* Orpheus is supposed to have lived a little after the times of Moses.

† We find notions analogous to this prevailing among the remotest Indians in the East. Their Brahma is a Being far superior to the human race;—the Interpreter of the Divinity,

effects of this interposition have always been more general, and more important, than seems to be commonly supposed. Thus it is with great justice that the Redeemer is called in Sacred Writ *The Desire of all Nations*; but with what propriety could he have been so called, if the nations had no notion of such a Redeemer, no desire towards him, no expectation of blessings or happiness from him? We therefore suppose it to be part of the exercise of the Mediator's Commission and Government, not only finally to accomplish the redemption and restoration of the world, but also, during the present intermediate order and dispensation of things, to convey and diffuse to all People, Nations, and Language, by means and instruments which to him shall seem meet, such Divine communications as may preserve in the world that sense of the Deity, and that knowledge of his Will, his Ways, and Designs towards men, which may be necessary; till through the increase of the Mediator's Authority and Government, the purposes of his mediation shall be fully completed; and the whole earth be full of the knowledge of God, and nothing but Peace, Innocence, and Happiness have place among his works. Is not this forming a more worthy conception of the gracious Counsel of the Great Design of

nity, the Author of the Sacred Books, and great Law-giver of India. In the island of Ceylon, among the Deities of a second order, particular honours are paid to Buddou, who descended upon earth to take upon him the office of a Mediator between God and mankind. The Budzoists also, a sect in Japan, worship a kind of Mediator between God and the human race.—Abbé Renall's Hist.

the Universal Parent, the impartial Father and Guardian of the whole human race, than to suppose his care and providence, especially in matters of eternal moment, confined to any particular nation or people? Nature and Reason as well as Revelation may convince us, *that there is no respect of persons with God*: but that in every nation they that fear him, and sincerely seek to render themselves acceptable to him, shall find acceptance with him; and that God is not, nor ever was, the God of the Jews only, and not also the God of the Gentiles, but the equal God and “Father of all the families of the earth.”

A further argument for the universality of the Divine Providence in religious matters, and for the extensive effects of the exercise of the Mediator’s government in the preservation of virtue and religion, is, the piety and good morals, the knowledge and fear of the true God, which we find to have prevailed universally, especially in the first ages of the world. In support of this argument, innumerable facts and characters, both from Sacred and Profane History, might be produced; but to point out their force, and apply it particularly, would lead far beyond the bounds proposed for the present discourse. I shall therefore only mention a few from Sacred Writ, to which every one may have recourse, and so examine and judge for themselves how far they tend to strengthen the argument in hand.

In the days of Abraham, we find the people among whom he lived, sincere, humane, candid,

did, and hospitable; in a word, virtuous and pious, and living in the fear of God. Of this there cannot be a stronger instance, than the sentiments and conduct of Abimelech, King of the Philistines, and his subjects, when Abraham was a sojourner among them. “ Abraham had said of Sarah his wife, she is my sister: and Abimelech sent and took her. But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said unto him, Behold thou art a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man’s wife. But Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, Lord wilt thou slay also a righteous nation? Said he not unto me, she is my sister? and she, even she herself said, he is my brother: in the integrity of my heart, and innocence of my hands, have I done this. And God said unto him, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also with-held thee from finning against me; therefore suffered I thee not to touch her. Now therefore restore the man his wife, &c.—Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ears; and the men were sore afraid. Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? and what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me, and on my kingdom, a great sin? Thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done.” &c. &c. Is it possible to draw a more striking picture than this, of unfeigned piety and innocence, of

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a tender deference to the rights of humanity and hospitality, of a sincere and conscientious regard to the rules of virtue and integrity? In the above narration two circumstances are particularly deserving of attention. One is, the awe of the Divine Displeasure, and the serious alarm that even the intention of a crime caused in this prince and his people.---*Abimelech arose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ears; and the men were sore afraid.* The other is the Divine communication with Abimelech, and care for the preservation of his innocence and integrity. God appeared unto him, and warned him against the crime he was in danger of committing.---*And God said unto him, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me; therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.* From which, and many other instances, we infer, that though only those divine revelations and personal communications with the Deity recorded in Sacred Writ, have come down to us with sufficient evidence of their authority; yet in no age or nation has the Divine Presence, and even supernatural interposition, been wanting in aid of virtue and religion. We have another instance similar to the above, with respect to Abraham and Pharaoh King of Egypt; where the Egyptians shew the same pious awe and fear of God, the same regard to virtue and good morals, that the Philistines had done. And when Abraham sent his servant to take a wife for his son Isaac, we find the Syrians, to whom he was sent, shew the

same characteristics of piety, humanity, and hospitality: the salutation of Laban to the servant is, *Come in thou blessed of the Lord, wherefore standest thou without?* &c.

It is only by accident we hear of Melchizedek; but from the short account we have of him, and the designation of *Priest of the Most High God* there given unto him, we have reason to conclude, that the worship of the true God was regularly professed, and maintained in the country, and that he was the Prince and High Priest of that district. We know that in the patriarchal ages, the father of the family, or perhaps of many descended families, exercised the authority of a King, and performed the function of a Priest for those families. And probably this Melchizedek was the oldest Patriarch in that country; the inhabitants of which were perhaps the greater part his descendants, among whom he of course held the authority of King, and discharged the office of High Priest.

Thus we find Job performing the office of Priest for his children, after they were departed from him, and settled in separate families. Each of his sons had been entertaining the rest in their several houses, and had called their sisters also to feast with them. “ And it was so, that “ when the days of their feasting were gone “ about, that Job sent and sanctified them; “ and rose up early in the morning, and offered “ burnt offerings according to the number of “ them all: for Job said, it may be that my “ sons have sinned, and cursed God in their “ hearts.

" hearts. Thus did Job continually." What an amiable image of sincere devotion, of tender paternal piety ! Nor can any thing be of more force in support of the present argument, for the universality of piety and virtue, of the knowledge and fear of God in the early ages of the world, than the characters and sentiments of Job and his friends. Whoever reads that book with any degree of attention, must observe, that their moral sentiments, their piety and devotion, their awe and veneration for the Supreme Being, appear more natural and sincere ; their sense of his omnipresence, of his universal providence, and interposition in human affairs, more immediate and genuine ; and their ideas and conceptions of his nature and operations, more just, more noble and sublime, in a word, more worthy of the Almighty, than are to be met with in any other writings, either sacred or profane. But these men were all of the Gentile Nations, and each of a different lineage, and seem to have had no acquaintance with any particular revelation recorded in Sacred Writ ; yet even among them we find the clear knowledge and firm belief of a Divine Redeemer.---*I know, says Job, that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.*---Why should I here mention Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, the Priest of Midian ? Why Balaam the son of Beor, a Moabite ; his extraordinary communications with God, and regular offering of sacrifice, in consulting the Deity ; and in particular, his remarkable prophecies, evidently alluding to the Universal

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Redeemer ? Why the candour and liberal piety of Hiram King of Tyre, in the days of Solomon ? Solomon had sent to Hiram to request the assistance of his subjects in preparing the materials for building the Temple of God at Jerusalem :--“ And when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed be the Lord this day, who hath given unto David a wise son over this great people.” I might here add the sentiments of the Queen of Sheba at the same period.---“ And the Queen of Sheba said unto Solomon, Blessed be the Lord, which delighted in thee to set thee on the Throne of Israel ; because the Lord loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee King to do judgment and justice,” I might further mention the Widow of Zarephath, a Zidonian ; Naaman the Leper, a Syrian ; instances adduced by our Lord himself in support of the same argument, which I would now wish to establish, To these I might add the Ethiopian Eunuch, of the court of Candace, Queen of Ethiopia, who had come from thence to Jerusalem to worship the true God : Cornelius the Centurion, an officer of the Roman army, whose sincere piety, devotion, and charity, we scarce find equalled in any character of any religion. And we find the piety and devotion of both these persons was acknowledged and accepted with God before they were formally acquainted with Christianity ; but we also find that they did not supersede the expediency, not to say the necessity, of their being made acquainted with it, and embracing its

its doctrines when they were made known unto them.

The whole book of Daniel abounds with wonderful instances of the exercise of the Divine Providence, and of its effects in the universal preservation of the knowledge and fear of God in the world. And though the Babylonish captivity, and the dispersion of the ten tribes, are in scripture principally considered as the punishment of their own wickedness and impiety ; that being the light in which they, to whom the predictions and threatenings concerning it were immediately directed, were most concerned to view it ; yet may we not with good reason suppose, that the providence of the Universal Sovereign had, besides this, other more important ends and purposes to accomplish by it ? Might it not be intended to be the means of reviving and disseminating universally the knowledge and fear of the One True Eternal God, among those nations where the original and natural notions and impressions of his Nature and Being were in a great measure worn out and lost ? And by thus reviving them in the empire of Assyria and Babylon, they were sure to be disseminated through almost all the then known world. And it is probable that the miraculous interposition in behalf of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the fiery furnace, and of Daniel in the den of lions, was not intended merely for the immediate preservation of those individuals, which the Divine Providence could have effected by natural means ; but more especially to promote this Important Design.

And

And how much they really contributed to this purpose, we may learn from their immediate effects and consequences; since we find that they not only impelled those Monarchs, who were immediate witnesses of them, to the acknowledgment and adoration of the true God; but were the occasion of several public edicts and decrees, prohibiting all impiety and contempt of the Deity under the severest penalties, and enjoining the acknowledgment and adoration of the One Supreme Being through the whole extent of their dominions. One such edict we find issued by Nebuchadnezer, after the deliverance of Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego, from the fiery furnace; and another by Darius, after the deliverance of Daniel from the den of lions. In this last especially, the omnipotency, the eternal existence, and universal supremacy of the One True God, are acknowledged in the most pointed and particular terms.---“ Then King Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages that dwell on the earth, Peace be multiplied unto you: I make a decree, that in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel; for he is the living God and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth.” &c. And although, having from history but a very imperfect account of the religious and moral affairs of those times and people, we do not particularly know what effect these

these edicts produced in the empire in general ; yet from the authority and stability of the laws of the Medes and Persians, we may reasonably conclude, that their influence was decisive, extensive, and of long duration\*. One circumstance, which strongly supports this conclusion, is, that spirit of piety and devotion towards the true God which prevailed in the government in the succeeding reign of Cyrus, who gave orders for rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem, and renewing the regular worship of God there. And we find Cyrus himself acknowledging his power and empire to be given him by the God of Heaven, and professing himself to have received a divine revelation and command from God to rebuild the temple; and devoutly paying that obedience to it, which is due to all the Divine admonitions. “ Thus saith Cyrus King of Persia, The Lord God of Heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem,” &c.

From the whole of what has been said on this argument, we may, I think, justly draw this conclusion : That the knowledge and fear of One Infinite, Eternal, Supreme Being, and consequently that piety and devotion towards him, and virtue and innocence of character in consequence of that, have in all ages been more

\* Probably it is to this occasion we are to refer what is mentioned by Justin respecting the prohibition of human sacrifices among the Carthaginians, by an edict from Darius King of Persia.—*Legati a Dario, Rege Persarum, Carthaginem venerunt, afferentes edictum, quo Pœni humanas hostias immolari, et cannina vesci prohibebantur.*—Just. lib. 19. cap. 1.

universal than is generally supposed from a superficial view of what is transmitted to us of the history of mankind ; and that this is the effect of the immediate administration of the Divine Providence in the Government of the Universal Mediator.----History relates the actions of the powerful, the turbulent, the ambitious ; who obtrude themselves on observation chiefly by agitating, distracting, and destroying the world. The general mass of mankind are lost in obscurity even while they live, and after death their lives and characters entirely consigned to oblivion. But it is the general mass of mankind that are concerned in the question of religion and morals ; and it is in the innocence and happiness of the general mass of mankind, that the Providence of the Universal Parent is concerned. Goodness and piety, where most genuine and sincere, are often least obtrusive and ostentatious ; and there may be much of both, and yet make little noise and show in the world. The religion requisite in the present state of human nature is not that which displays itself in the extravagant ardours and obtrusive zeal of religionists, the vain conceits and fond notions of visionaries, or intricate speculations and incomprehensible doctrines about abstract natures and mystic essences ; but that sense of the Supreme Being, and confidence in him, which will best support the mind through the various lot of human life, and confirm our hopes of real happiness in a better and more permanent state of existence ; that consciousness of the Divine Superintendency, and conviction of our being accountable

to him, which will controul the passions, regulate the life, form the character, and contribute to the good order and happiness, both of the individual, and of society in general. The Roman soldiers, who stood in such awe of an oath, that having once taken it, no human motive could impel them to violate it, shewed a juster sense of the Deity, and more of the genuine effects of religion, than any enthusiast that ever went about blazing his zeal, and obtruding his dogmas on the world. It was no fabulous Jupiter, Mars, or Apollo that they stood in awe of, but the Universal Vindicator of right and wrong, by whatever name or characteristic distinguished.

The powerful and polite kingdoms and nations of the world are perhaps far from being the criterion by which to make a just estimate of the general state of virtue, morals, and religion \* ; at least it is not from populous cities, the seats of empire, and the rich, the great, and powerful in those kingdoms, that we are to make this estimate ; but from the quiet and simple inhabitants of the villages and plains, whose virtue and religion, though most sincere and genuine, makes little noise, and passes with-

\* It is surprising to observe the simplicity of manners and purity of morals among the Germans and Scythians, when the utmost profligacy prevailed among polished nations.—Vide Tacit. de Moribus Germ. et Just. Hist. Prorsus ut admirabile videatur hoc illis naturam dâre, quod Græci longâ sapientium doctrinâ, præceptisque philosophorum consequi nequeunt ; cultosque mores incultæ barbariæ collatione superari. Tanto plus in illis proficit vitorum ignorantio, quam in his cognitio virtutis.—Just. lib. 2. cap. 2.

out observation. Nor does the happiness adapted to the present state of man consist in the unbounded gratification of acquired and unnatural wants, of appetites and passions inflamed and corrupted by indulgence; but in having our appetites, affections, and passions adapted to the state and principles of our nature, and the objects which these supply. Hence there is perhaps often more, both of true virtue and genuine happiness, among simple and unpolished nations, whom we call barbarous, than even all the excellency of the Christian religion, and the advantages of improved society, can secure to those whom luxury and affected refinement have led so totally astray from the integrity and simplicity of nature. But to secure the *Virtue* and *Happiness* of mankind is the proper end and object of all moral and religious institutions in the present world; and where these are most fully accomplished in this life, the interests and objects that lie beyond it will also be most effectually secured. And to provide, order, and dispose, in all ages and nations, the means of most universally effecting these ends and purposes; to administer the whole Divine Dispensations for the preservation of religion and virtue in the world, for promoting the happiness and good order of human society in the present state of nature, and best securing the everlasting interests of immortal being; this, we suppose to be the immediate exercise of the Mediator's delegated government, till the *Great Design* of his message be accomplished, till the glorious consummation finally determined upon

shall come, and the auspicious reign of the Prince of Peace shall be fully established.

Or the subject may be thus concisely stated : There can be but one unchangeable and absolutely perfect Being. Created Beings must be of a limited nature, and finite in every attribute and perfection of their nature; and hence necessarily subject to change, perversion, corruption, and decay. Now, does not a System of Beings so constituted seem from their very nature to require a perpetual Mediator, Protector, and Guardian ; and one of dignity and power equal to such an important charge ? One able to protect and watch over all the weaknesses, infirmities, and imperfections of finite Beings ; to prevent, as far as is consistent with the nature of the System, their breaking out into effects ; to repair all actual breaches and perversions of Nature ; to remedy all hurtful effects and consequences occasioned by them ; and to check and controul universally the power and operation of Evil ; that is, to preserve uninterrupted, or to restore wherever interruption may have taken place, the beneficent order of Nature ; and thus to maintain, as far as a system of finite Beings will admit, perfection and felicity through all the works of God. And the execution of this important charge was by the Divine destination delegated unto the Eternal Son, the Universal *Upholder* and *Helper* throughout the world. And will it not be allowed, that this is a destination truly important and interesting, worthy to be devised by the Divine Counsel and Wisdom, and worthy to be undertaken

taken by him, whom the Omnipotent calls his *Fellow* and his *Equal*?

And surely he, who from eternity devised, now carries on, and shall finally accomplish this Important Undertaking, may truly be called *The Wonderful Counsellor*\*; for though this name may justly be applied to the Redeemer, in consideration of his agency and participation in all the Divine Counsels and Works; yet it seems here to have a particular respect to the wonderful plan of Redemption by him devised and carried on. By his counsel and wisdom was the noble frame of the Universe designed, and all this great and goodly System of innumerable worlds brought into existence and order. By his counsel and wisdom were all those rules prescribed, and laws impressed, by whose unremitting operation their existence and order have been so long maintained and preserved. But more especially, by his counsel and wisdom shall a future, and still more excellent, order of things take place: and it is to this that the term *Wonderful Counsellor* seems here more

\* I am aware that these words in our common translation are used as expressive of two distinct characters; but besides that joining them is more conformable to the general idiom of language, as well as to the form of expression in the rest of the verse; I find them used as one appellation in other versions of the Sacred Writings, translated, as well as ours, immediately from the original. In the Septuagint indeed the two terms are separated, as are also the two following, which our translators render *The Mighty God*: And the whole seem there to be used only as adjectives or attributes ascribed to the important character expressed in the words prefixed to this discourse,—*The Messenger of the Great Design.*

particularly to allude. And so truly wonderful and mysterious is this glorious device, that the plan and principles upon which it proceeds are entirely beyond the reach of human comprehension; and it would therefore be both folly and presumption in us to attempt to reason upon them, or trace them out. What is necessary for us to know in consequence of the interest we have in it, God has graciously been pleased to reveal unto us. And while we perceive the facts which are revealed to be wonderful, and worthy of sacred admiration, we may also perceive, from the extent of their nature and design, that their reasons and principles must extend far beyond the bounds of our conceptions.

But the wonderful and mysterious nature of the Divine interposition in behalf of finite Beings, and of the whole Council of God for our salvation, is no reasonable objection to the truth of the fact; nor a foundation for any argument, that it may not be the means of our redemption\*. A condemned criminal may receive a pardon, and enjoy the benefit of it without knowing how it was obtained for him, or what it was that induced his prince to grant it. And it would certainly be reckoned the utmost pitch of madness and folly for him to reject it, because he could not perceive the secret reasons for its being offered to him, nor find out the

\* It being long since the writer first made some notes on this part of the subject, without any intention of ever offering them to the public; he is hence not certain but some of the thoughts here may be borrowed from other authors, though he cannot now acknowledge them particularly.

steps that had been taken in order to procure it for him. It is not peculiar to the work of redemption to be wonderful and mysterious, it is the common characteristic of all the works of God. The operations of God in the System of Nature are not less wonderful, and beyond our comprehension, than in that of redemption ; and would perhaps be as obstinately denied by those who will allow nothing to exist beyond the limits of their narrow conceptions, did not the immediate presence of the objects to their senses vindicate their existence. We are as ignorant of the nature of creation, and of the intimate cause and manner of subsistence even in material beings, as we are of the redemption of the world, or even of the resurrection of the body. We can no more comprehend how this stupendous fabric of Nature was at first called into existence out of nothing, and how it is still upheld in its present regularity and order, than we can comprehend the method of our Redemption by the mediation and atonement of the Son of God. And we might, with as much pretension to reason, reject the light and heat of the Sun, because we do not know how that glorious Orb was created and suspended in the sky, nor whence its vast and continual expence of light and heat are supplied, as reject the salvation proposed in the gospel, because the means by which it is accomplished are beyond our comprehension. All the works of God are wonderful, and his ways past finding out ; can we then think it strange, that his Great Counsel and Device for the present preservation, and the

final perfection of Nature; for the universal Redemption and complete felicity of all created Beings, should be unsearchably Wonderful; and that he, to whom the execution of this Glorious Device is committed, should be Wonderful in his Counsels, Wonderful in his Person, and Wonderful in his Character?

And what can be more Wonderful, than that an Infinite Eternal Being, self-existent in supreme glory and felicity before all worlds, should for us be born a child; and that though he took upon him our nature, he did not divest himself of his divine nature; but was, is, and ever shall be *The Mighty God*, the Eternal Potentate, and Supreme Lord of Nature?

As the preceding characteristic, *The Mighty God*, may here more particularly allude to the essential supremacy of the Redeemer in Eternity past, *The Everlasting Father* seems to express the character in which he shall be considered in Eternity to come, the relation in which he shall stand to the future Redeemed World. For the words, according to their original import, and as they are rendered in other versions of the Sacred Writings\*, do not so properly imply *The Everlasting Father*, as the Father of the *Eternal Age to come*, or of the *Future Everlasting Age*; and imply that the Redeemer, in consequence of his agency in its introduction, shall be considered as the Father, the Guardian, and Governor of that glorious and blessed Age which he

\* Πατὴς τῆς μελλοντος ἀιῶνος. Sept.—Pater Eternitatis.—Bib. Sac. Castell.

shall introduce ; of that perfect and happy Order of things, which we hope and look for as the consequence of his mediatorial Commission and Government.

The last and most important characteristic here ascribed to the Redeemer is, *The Prince of Peace*. This characteristic is with peculiar propriety applied to the Universal Restorer of Nature's works ; since by the blood of his cross he has made peace, and obtained reconciliation with God for all Beings ; since to extirpate all malice, strife, and discord, and to promote universal peace, love, and benevolence in the world, is the very spirit and essence of the precepts which he delivered, of the doctrines which he taught, and of the religion which he prescribed to mankind ; and since to restore peace, good order, and harmony, with never-ending increase, through all the works of God, is the ultimate end and purpose of his mediatorial Office and Character : for of the increase of his Government and Peace there shall be no end.----And this leads more immediately to the second general branch of the subject proposed.

Which was : To endeavour to suggest some idea, of the blessed and happy effects of this Government of the Prince of Peace, and of that glorious and important Consummation which we expect as the final consequence of it.

It can scarce be necessary to observe here, that the word Peace is often used as implying not merely tranquility and concord, which is its natural signification, but as expressive of every blessing and felicity, and of the same import with

with the word Happiness. And it is in this, its most extensive sense, that it is to be here understood, as implying all the blessings and advantages derived to the world by the mediation of the Redeemer, by the delegated Government of the Prince of Peace. How great and extensive these are even in the present state of Nature, we seem but imperfectly to know ; and far less can we even conceive what their extent and effects will be in that future and perfect Order of Things, which it is the end of this Government to introduce. But thus far we may with certainty venture to pronounce, that whatever benefits and advantages the world enjoys under the present Christian dispensation, above what it enjoyed under any other dispensation or system of religion, these we may justly ascribe to the influence of the Authority and Laws, to the increase of the Kingdom and Government of the Prince of Peace ; and that these are very great, even the opposers of Christianity must allow. If the general knowledge and acknowledgment of the true God ; if proper notions and right conceptions of the Divine nature and perfections ; if the advancement of humanity and virtue in the world ; if the improvement of human society in general, will be allowed to be advantages ; for these, it must certainly be acknowledged, the world is indebted to the Christian Religion. Whence is that general face of gentleness and humanity, of tenderness and deference for the common sentiments and feelings of nature, which the world now bears ? Whence that forbearance of all unnecessary insults, and

whatever is grievous and painful to our common nature, so different from the savageness and barbarity of even the most enlightened of former ages, but now mutually agreed upon even between enemies ? Even the horrid front of war itself is now smoothed ; and dreadful and severe as it still is, it is mild and gentle in comparison of the unrestrained licentiousness and outrage with which it was wont to lay waste the world. It is now seldom stained with wanton and unnecessary carnage, with the blood of helpless women and children, with the slaughter of the defenceless and unresisting ; nor are its wretched captives now devoted to slavery or death, as they formerly were, at the arbitrary will of an enraged conqueror. By the mutual consent of nations, all those crimes, violences, and outrages that are shocking and disgraceful to humanity, are now universally suppressed and discouraged ; and a general regard to all the natural rights of men is become the ruling principle in the laws and government of all civilized nations. Whence proceeds this advantageous change, and to what cause are we to ascribe it ? To what else can it be ascribed, but to the benign influence of that spirit of mildness, charity, and humanity, that the increasing government of the Prince of Peace has diffused over the world ? Nor are these happy effects confined to those countries and nations where the Christian Religion is formally professed ; but by the mutual intercourse of society, they are extended to almost the remotest regions of the earth ; and hence many of the blessings and

and advantages of the Kingdom and Government of the Prince of Peace are even now enjoyed by those who do not yet acknowledge his authority, nor have ever heard of his name. As the inhabitants of those regions, which lie most remote from the Sun's tract, see his light, and enjoy many of the comforts and advantages of it long before his Orb appears to their eyes; and as this previous light is to them a sign of the Sun's approach, and an earnest that they shall in time see him in all his splendor; even so are the slow but benign influences of the glorious Sun of Righteousness, which we see gradually extending themselves to the most barbarous nations, an earnest that he shall in time rise upon them in all his radiance, and the light of the blessed Gospel in its full brightness shine to the utmost ends of the earth. But even this is only introductory to the reign and government of the Prince of Peace, and that glorious and happy Consummation which we expect as the final effect of the full establishment of it.

By what particular steps or events this Universal Redemption, this general Restoration of Nature, will be brought to its complete and final issue, neither Reason or Revelation afford us sufficient light to determine. But, I think, we have strong reasons from Revelation to suppose, that some very interesting change in human affairs, some very important step towards the establishment of the Reign of the Prince of Peace, will take place even in the present world, and before the general catastrophe of Nature.

And

And it appears that many of those descriptions of bliss and felicity, so far exceeding the present condition of human affairs, both in Sacred and Profane Writers, allude to this period.--- This persuasion cannot but occur, especially to any one who will read with particular attention the twelfth chapter of the book of Daniel, and the twentieth chapter of the book of Revelation; in both of which a Partial Resurrection of the dead, previous to the General Resurrection, seems to be plainly mentioned. And whether the period of *a thousand years*, and *the binding and casting of Satan into the bottomless pit*, mentioned by St. John, are to be understood mystically or literally, there cannot be a doubt but that a period of innocence and happiness, under the more immediate auspices of the Redeemer, is there pointed out; and that this period is described as prior to the New Heavens and New Earth, and the universal revolution of Nature afterward mentioned. And Daniel, after describing this period by nearly the same marks as St. John, adds, *And when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.* Which may be understood to imply, that when the knowledge and principles of the Religion of Salvation by the Divine Redeemer shall, in the course of his mediatorial administration, be spread and disseminated over the whole habitable world, and its power and influence universally prevail, then shall that period of righteousness and happiness take place, which shall be in a particular manner the Government of the Prince of Peace.

And

And to this period which shall intervene between the universal acknowledgment and establishment of the Kingdom and Power of the Redeemer, and the final consummation of the present System of Nature, we suppose those passages of Sacred Writ to refer, which describe a scene of bliss and felicity adapted to the present Order of Nature, yet so far transcending all that we can conceive in the present condition of the world.

Instances are innumerable of the Sacred Writers alluding in the most sublime strain to a blissful period of peace and felicity, when the most savage natures shall put off their ferocity : “ When strife and violence shall be no more heard, wasting and destruction no more seen ; “ when they shall not hurt nor destroy in all the blessed precincts of the Divine Dominions. “ When the people shall be all righteous and innocent ; and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of God, as the waters cover the sea.” In the same sublime strain we find the description of a Majesty and Excellency of person and character far above all the characteristics of human dignity and power. These we find most commonly founded in terror, in war, and destruction ; but here we find the celebration of a Majesty that is founded in *truth*, in *meekness*, and in *righteousness*: these are the true distinguishing characteristics of the Reign of the Prince of Peace. “ In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the Moon endureth ; his name shall endure for ever ; his name shall be continued as long as the Sun : and men shall be “ blessed

" blessed in him, and all nations shall call him " blessed." Though in some of these passages it is probable the Psalmist might immediately allude to Solomon, and the flourishing state of his kingdom; yet it is impossible not to remark, *That surely a greater than Solomon is here.* But it were endless to enumerate every thing to this purpose in Sacred Writ. And those notions and conceptions of a scene of bliss, of an Order of Things, so far exceeding all that we can conceive most excellent and happy in the present state of human affairs, suggested by what we have already mentioned, must be allowed, even by those who deny the divine authority of Revelation, to be an unavoidable argument, that the notion and expectation of such an happy revolution in the state of sublunary things has its foundation in nature; and hence, that it is true, and will actually take place. For should we grant them, that the authors of these writings were not supernaturally inspired, they must then certainly grant that such a notion and expectation is natural and congenial to the human mind, and an original principle of our constitution; and that God, who cannot deceive, and who does nothing in vain, has, by the hand of Nature, impressed on the minds of men these sentiments, and inspired them with these hopes and expectations of his Kingdom, and of that blessed and happy Order of Things, which shall take place under it. Whence else will they say that such notions are derived? And how did they become so universal and prevailing as we find them

to have been? For though Revelation gives a more clear and distinct account of these things, than men could otherwise have retained, yet, independent of Revelation, we find that the notion and expectation of some such important and happy change in the course of nature and state of things has prevailed among men in every age of the world. And indeed there are not wanting from Nature and Reason intimations and arguments sufficient to excite in those who think or reason at all, at least the hopes of such a revolution and restoration of the Divine works. From the Wisdom, the Power, and the Goodness of the Creator, we naturally and reasonably conclude, that all things were at first made good and regular, perfect and happy. And from the consideration of the same unchangeable Wisdom, Power, and Goodness, may we not, must we not, still conclude, that they will yet again be restored to their original state of order, perfection, and felicity? This is the hope that Reason and Nature, if attended to, must suggest; and this is the hope that Revelation confirms.

However unaccountable it may be, that evil and disorder should ever have gained access among the works of a Being of infinite goodness to purpose, of infinite wisdom to plan, and of infinite power to execute, what was most supremely good, and most permanently perfect; yet certain it is that evil, both physical and moral, have obtruded themselves on the world, and greatly defaced and deformed the beautiful and excellent works of the Creator. And as

moral evil evidently arises immediately from the voluntary operations of free agents, from the depravity of the human heart, and the perverseness of the human will ; it is probable that physical evil proceeds from the same perverseness of will, and malignity of disposition, in voluntary agents of a superior and more powerful nature ; whose power and influence in the physical world produce all that horrible disorder, confusion, and uproar, which we there sometimes behold. Hence storms, tempests, earthquakes, plagues, pestilence, and all the perversions of Nature from its original good and benevolent design. Nor is this merely subject of probability, That there are such malignant powers, that there is such a Principle of Evil, is a fact for which we have the authority of Revelation itself : and he is there called the *Prince of the Power of the Air*, thereby intimating his influence in the elements, and general System of Nature. And we are there further informed, that it was by his machinations that even moral evil was first introduced into the world, and the human system itself corrupted : and by his influence in nature, both on matter and spirit, moral as well as physical evil has been widely diffused, and still greatly prevails. Thus, though the Kingdom and the Power, both in the natural and moral world, of right belong unto the Lord, and he is the Supreme Sovereign in all the regions of Being ; yet that a Principle of Evil has gained admission in the works of Nature ; that The Evil One, Satan, has, through a permission unsearchable by us, obtained

obtained in the world a kingdom and power opposite to the kingdom and authority of God, is a fact which from experience is too plain to be denied.

And it is the entire extirpation of this Principle of Evil, with all its attendants and consequences; the complete and final subversion and overthrow of this kingdom and power of Satan; the abolition of all his works; the restoration of all the breaches and perversions they have occasioned in the System of Nature; and the re-establishment of original good order, perfection, and felicity through all the regions of Being, which we here suppose to be the object and design of the Mediator's Undertaking and Government. Nature at present is evidently distracted and disordered; we see strife, confusion, and misery to prevail through all her bounds; and every part at variance and war with itself: passions at war, animals at war, nations at war, the elements themselves at war. But entirely to compose this strife, finally to exclude discord and war, and to restore universal concord and harmony through all the bounds of Nature, is the genuine effect and consequence of the Reign of the Prince of Peace.

It is this universal Restorarion of Nature, when there shall again be nothing but love and innocence, peace and happiness, through all the Creator's works, that is to be understood by the coming of *The Kingdom of God*. This is the true import of *The Redemption of the World*: for in whatever contracted or common-place sense this expression may generally be used, or under-

stood, taken in its full extent, and in its true and natural import, it suggests an idea grand and important beyond all human conception; an idea which the mind labours in vain to bring into form, which language in vain attempts to describe! --- Yet fain would I lead the mind out of the common confined tract of thinking and reasoning on this sublime subject! Fain would I suggest something beyond the received train of sentiments and opinions of the Great and God-like Purpose! Some more worthy and adequate conception of the Glorious and Interesting Scene!

The smallest unbiased reflection on the equal benevolence, the impartial goodness of the Universal Father and Guardian of the human race, the Parent and Preserver of the whole System of Beings, must convince us, that they have certainly too narrow and contracted views of the Divine Scheme for the Redemption of the world, who suppose its influence confined to those effects which we now discern to be produced by it; or even to those in their utmost extent, which are generally ascribed to it by most of those who have treated of the subject. If we consider the *Redemption of the World* as implying merely the restoration of a few of the human race in particular ages and nations to the Divine favour, and the enjoyment of happiness, while all the rest of the Creator's works are devoted to endless destruction, and worse than made in vain, made only for evil and misery; it may certainly be justly objected to as unworthy of the Infinite Wisdom, the All-embracing Goodness,

ness, and All-accomplishing Power of the *Most High God, the Possessor of Heaven and Earth.*--- Yet this is the sum of the account generally given of the Redemption of the world; this is the highest conception generally formed of the design of the Christian Religion by the greater part of its professors. Considered in this narrow and partial view, it is no wonder that they who chuse rather to object to the partial representations which the defenders of Christianity give of it, than to examine impartially into the nature and extent of the glorious Device, should presume so much on the force of their reasonings against it, as unworthy of the Wisdom, the Goodness, and Equity of the Great Parent and Sovereign of Nature. But whoever will give the smallest attention to these reasonings on both sides, may plainly perceive, that the greatest advantages boasted of by the opposers of the Christian Religion are derived from the narrow grounds assumed, and the confined efforts made by, many who have undertaken to defend it. And it might be easy to shew, that not only may the grounds upon which Christianity is to be defended be greatly enlarged, but even those upon which many of the works of the enemy for its overthrow have been raised, might with advantage be taken possession of, and used against themselves; and are indeed mere usurpations, of which the weak or unskilful efforts of their opponents have suffered them to take possession, and to boast of so long as their own.

It is strange that on this subject we should still adopt all the prejudices and partialities of  
the

the Jews themselves in favour of their nation, in thinking that they were the only people in the world for whom the Almighty had any regard, or who had any interest in his Care and Providence previous to the Christian Dispensation; notwithstanding this prejudice is reprobated in the most plain and pointed terms in many parts of Sacred Writ. We find an immediate vision and revelation from Heaven sent to drive St. Peter from this partial prejudice of his nation; and he is at last with difficulty brought to perceive, and acknowledge, *That there is no respect of persons with God.* St. Paul, whose education had been more liberal, and whose sentiments were less confined, asks, with a seeming indignation at such a supposition, “ Is he the “ God of the Jews only? Is he not also the “ God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles “ also.” Yet so strongly are we still wedded to these absurd and unworthy prejudices, that the Jews formerly, and professed Christians at present, or perhaps some particular sect or denomination of Christians, are all that many will allow to have any interest in the Goodness and Mercy of the Universal Parent, or to whom the gracious plan of Redemption has any respect. Thus the Great Counsel of the Omnipotent for the Restauration of all his works is represented as a narrow and partial Device, conformable to the fond prejudices and irritated humours of opposing parties; and *The Messenger of the Great Design, The Prince of Peace,* is made *a Man of strife, and a Man of contention to the whole earth.*

But

But surely both Reason and Revelation warrant us to ascribe unto this Great Design ends and purposes far more extensive and important : and to expect from it effects and consequences far more interesting and glorious ; even the entire extirpation of Evil, Disorder, and Misery, and the restoration of Peace, Perfection, and Felicity, through all the regions of the Divine dominions. To effect these important and glorious ends and purposes through the whole universal System of Beings, is what we suppose the true idea of the Redemption of the World to import, and the Undertaking of the Universal Redeemer to imply. It is to this important Consummation that St. Peter alludes, when he mentions *the times of Restitution of All Things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.* And to this we are taught to allude, when in our daily prayers we pray to God that *his kingdom may come.* And a dispensation which is thus to put a final period to Evil and Misery, and to restore universal Innocence and Felicity to all that the Sovereignty of Heaven comprehends, must certainly be allowed to be truly great and interesting ; and worthy of the Wisdom and Benevolence of that adorable Being, by whom the Glorious and Important Design was framed. This is the Catastrophe so particularly described by the Angel to Daniel, when he mentions a time as determined upon in the Divine dispensations : “ To finish transgression, and to make an end of sin ; to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in ever-

" everlasting righteousness ; to seal up \* vision  
 " and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy." That is, to put an end to all that vice and misery, confusion and disorder ; to all that perversion of Nature from its original destination, which we now see ; to expiate all guilt contracted, all crimes committed, during the disordered state of Nature ; to set aside the present Order and Administration of the Divine Oeconomy, which is only adapted to the present perverted state of things ; and to restore all things to that state of perfection and bliss, in which they were originally framed ; to introduce universal innocence, permanent righteousness, and the unresisted Kingdom and Authority of God, in all places of his dominions, without Adversary or evil Opponent.

And if we may suppose this period of innocence and felicity to commence before the final Catastrophe of nature, may it not follow, as a natural consequence, that through the increase of that peace, purity, and innocence, which shall then universally prevail, the nature and disposition of mortals may become so perfect and refined, that the dissolution of their frame may be no longer necessary to put them in possession, and make them capable of the enjoyment of im-

\* I have here purposely omitted the definite particle (the) used by our translators ; not only because it renders the expression more conformable to that of the rest of the verse, and to the apparent scope of the whole ; but also because the expression is rendered indefinitely in the Septuagint, and other most approved translations from the original.

mortal happiness: and hence it will be, that when the end cometh, they who then live *shall not die, but be changed*; shall pass immediately from mortality to immortality. Thus “mortality shall be swallowed up of life, and death itself, the last enemy, be destroyed; and death and hell cast into the lake of fire.”

Though it is not clear from Revelation what shall be the fate of the material world on this occasion, yet we have reason to suppose that it will rather be changed and renewed, than annihilated and destroyed. We find St. Paul, by a bold figure of speech, representing even the material and inanimate creation as longing and waiting with painful expectation for this important change. “For the earnest expectation of the creature,” says he, “waiteth for the manifestation of the Sons of God; because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the Children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travelleth in pain together until now; and not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” From which it would appear, that when the last Enemy, Death, shall be destroyed, all the victims of his power shall also be rescued; and the principles of evil and corruption be extirpated from the material, as well as from the moral world; and the whole creation restored to the original per-

fection of its nature, which we suppose to have been incorruptible and immortal.

And though we can trace particularly the design and effects of the Universal Redeemer's Undertaking only, in that part of the System of Nature which, in some degree, falls under our knowledge and observation ; yet there is ground from Revelation, as well as from the analogy of things, to suppose that it extends to Beings that lie entirely beyond the reach of our conception. For whoever advert's to the boundless beneficence of the Universal Parent, and the ways and degrees in which an infinite Operator may confer Being and Enjoyment, cannot doubt for a moment but there are more things, and more Beings in Nature than either our Reason or Religion give us any notice of. But all these, whatever they may be, are the subjects of the Mediator's Government, and the objects of his Redemption : as being the Universal Operator of Omnipotence, he by whom the Almighty executes all his purposes, carries on, and shall bring to perfection all his works. For it is a doctrine laid down in the most pointed and express terms in scripture, " That God hath purposed in him-self, in the dispensation of the fulness of time, to gather together, in one, all things in Christ;----and having made peace by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven." That is, having, by the shedding of his precious blood, expiated all guilt and crimes in Nature, and rendered

dered the Deity propitious to all Beings; and having fitted and prepared all Beings for the full enjoyment of the Divine Beneficence, to unite all in one system of peace, love, and felicity, under the benignant smile of the propitiated Deity !

Now if we contemplate the Divine scheme of redemption in this enlarged and comprehensive view, who can refuse to acknowledge its excellency and importance? Who can deny it to be truly worthy of the Majesty and Beneficence of the gracious Author of Nature, the tender Parent, and impartial Guardian of all Beings? And what spirit can forbear to rejoice, what heart to exult, in the hope and prospect of seeing, of enjoying, and of bearing a part in such a glorious scene, such a blessed and happy order, and disposition of things! Nor ought the slow progress, as yet visibly made towards such an important and happy consummation as is here suggested, to be considered as any objection; but in contemplating these great and interesting subjects, we ought always to keep in mind the eternity and infinity of the Divine Counsels and Operations; and that, *with God one day is a thousand years; and a thousand years as one day.*

Of what has been said, this, then, is the sum: that for the accomplishment of the Divine purpose of extending Being, and diffusing happiness and enjoyment, the work of creation, together with the administration of the whole Divine œconomy towards created Beings, was committed unto the Son, the second person of

the adorable Trinity: and hence he possesses a delegated mediatorial authority and character, distinct from his eternal essential power and Godhead.----That of this delegated authority, one branch is, to preserve unperverted all the Divine works, so far as is consistent with the nature of each system; or to remedy and restore whatever breaches or perversions may be incident to finite Beings, from their nature, necessarily subject to imperfection and change.---That evil, both physical and moral, having, by a permission which we in vain attempt to scan, actually gained access into the creation, and greatly perverted and defaced the good and beautiful works of Nature; and especially corrupted and ruined the human system; a principal part, therefore, of this mediatorial character, or at least a part in which we are principally interested, is the restoration of this breach and perversion of nature,----the redemption of the human race,----the total extirpation of evil, with all its effects and consequences, from the whole of this sublunary system of things.----That of this, his gracious purpose and destination, he hath, at sundry times, and in divers manners, given information to the world. And though we have now only authentic accounts of the communications of this nature made to the Jewish nation; yet from many vestiges that may be traced in the general history of mankind, there is reason to believe, that such communications, and in consequence of them, that the expectation of this restoration and redemption were originally

originally universal : and that at all times, both the expectation of a Divine Redeemer, and the effects of his interposition, have been much more general, than we, misled by our narrow conceptions of the Divine Counsels and Works, and by adopting the partiality of the Jews in applying the Divine Revelation with which they were favoured, seem now to conceive them to have been. But that the universal Parent of Nature, the Father of all the families of the earth, now is, and always was, not *the God of the Jews only*, but *the God of the Gentiles also*.---Hence, both from the essential goodness of God, and from express revelation, we conclude that this redemption is universal, and implies the full and perfect restoration of all the works of God : the restoration of beauty, order, and harmony, in their highest perfection, to every part of the material creation ; and the restoration of happiness in the highest degree for which their natures are fitted, to all Beings capable of enjoying sensible happiness. In a word, the restoration of an Order and System of things, where nothing but peace and harmony, love and joy, innocence and felicity, shall have place. If we extend this idea through all the regions of Nature, the earth, the heavens, the celestial bodies, the inconceivable immensity of space ; all that the Infinite Eye views, all that the Infinite Mind comprehends ; if with ourselves we conceive all Beings capable of immortal felicity enjoying this glorious and happy Order of things ; the happiness of each increased by the sense and participation of the universal felicity of the whole, we have

have then some conception of what we would here suggest, as implied in the Coming of the Kingdom of God,---the Redemption of the World,---the Restitution of All Things,---and of the final Consummation and Issue of the Redeemer's mediatorial Office and Character.

Still further to enlarge this conception; who can say, or even conceive, through what degrees of perfection and felicity our own and other natures may be progressively refined and exalted, so as to produce an eternally varied succession of increasing glory and happiness? For who can conceive the extent of perfection, the immensity of bliss, that Infinite Love and Goodness can confer on its objects?

If we would make this idea still more adequate to the boundless magnificence of the Author of Being and of Bliss, we may suppose not only the Worlds and Beings now existing to be subjected to the Mediator's Government, and partakers of the felicity of this Universal Redemption; but new Worlds, new Systems of Being, new Principalities and Powers, to be adding to it to all eternity; for *of the increase of his Government and Peace there shall be no end.* And what boundless conceptions of glory and felicity may we not form, when we raise our thoughts to the possible operations of Infinite Power, directed by Infinite Wisdom, and prompted by Infinite Goodness, to confer Existence and Enjoyment in the greatest number and variety of ways?

When the mind is accustomed to these enlarged conceptions of the Divine Counsel and Design

Design of Universal Redemption and Felicity, how contemptible seem the narrow and conceited cavillings of Infidels, or Free-thinkers (as they are most preposterously pleased to call themselves); arraigning the ways of Omnipotence, because in such an infinite scheme of operations there are some things which their contracted minds, and these too blinded by prejudice and pride, cannot comprehend !

F I N I S.





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